

Physical activity and nutrition are a winning combination for the City of Tamarac, Florida's Department of Parks and Recreation. The Department's Senior Program serves more than 1200 seniors through 39 different programs and activities each week. Every day, seniors enjoy learning about a different aspect of wellness. Whether it's Massage Mondays, Wellness Wednesdays, or Fitness Fridays, the goal of each program is to raise awareness of heart healthy eating and physical activity. All programs target adults over 55 years of age.

Through the combined resources of partners, such as the city's Department of Veterans and Elderly Affairs, the Coral Springs Medical Center, Area Agency on Aging, North Broward District Hospital, the American Heart Association, and the American Red Cross each program was offered one time per week for 12 weeks. Partners provided health and fitness professionals who conducted lectures and disseminated educational materials.

Massage Mondays activities included providing seniors with massages and distributing written materials that promote active lifestyles. Wellness Wednesdays offered presentations by local health professionals on such topics as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, nutrition and sleep disorders. The Fitness Fridays program provided participants with a fitness trainer that demonstrated the proper use of fitness equipment and appropriate stretching and warm-up exercises. The trainer also helped participants keep a personal fitness log. In addition, participants received information on healthy menu options and various health-related materials.

Other programs such as Walk Fit 2004, Dancercise for a Healthy Heart, and Arthritis and Your Heart added heart healthy eating to the overall message. In the Walk Fit program, participants improved their physical activity by walking on treadmills. They recorded time walked, distance, pulse rate, and their weight. But they also received bi-weekly health lectures, healthy menu options, and various health-related educational materials.

Likewise, in the Dancercise for a Healthy Heart program, participants danced and exercised to music and they enjoyed nutrition lectures, healthy menu options, and received health-related literature.

Each component had an overall focus of health and wellness through exercise and better nutrition. Through these programs, Tamarac's seniors increased their knowledge about healthy eating, blood pressure, and obesity. They also improved their heart healthy eating behavior and physical activity.